

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 37, wherein the smectite clay is a synthetic smectite.
10. (Previously presented) A method for protecting skin from contact with an allergen comprising topically applying to the skin an allergen sorbent composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol, phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, ethanol, cyclomethicone, dimethicone, hexamethyldisiloxane, isopropyl palmitate, isopropyl myristate, glycerol and admixtures thereof.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the composition comprises 1% to about 30% by weight of the surface modified clay and 99% to 70% by weight solvent.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the allergen sorbent composition is applied as a salve.
13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the gel is applied as an aerosol spray.
14. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the composition is applied to a substrate selected from the group consisting of clothing, shoes, and pets to deactivate an allergen sorbed thereon.
15. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the organic surface modifier is contained by the clay in an amount in the range of about 10% to about 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the surface-modified clay, without considering the weight of the cosmetically acceptable solvent.
16. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the organic surface modifier is an n-alkyl pyrrolidone wherein the alkyl is at least 10 carbon atoms in length.
17. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the amount of surface modified clay dispersed in the cosmetically acceptable solvent is in the range of 1% to about 30% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.
18. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the amount of surface modified clay dispersed in the cosmetically acceptable solvent is in the range of about 5% to about 15% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.
19. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the cosmetically acceptable solvent is selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, ethanol, a volatile silicon fluid, isopropyl palmitate, isopropyl myristate, glycerol, and admixtures thereof.
20. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the smectite clay is selected from the group consisting of montmorillonite, saponite, hectorite, beidellite, and mixtures thereof.
21. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the smectite clay is a montmorillonite clay.

22. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the smectite clay is a synthetic smectite.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) A method of deactivating an allergen and reducing the severity of an allergic reaction caused by contact of the allergen with human skin comprising applying to the clothes of an individual, after exposure to said allergen, a composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule to form a surface-modified clay, said intercalant molecule containing at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol, phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) An allergen sorbent composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol, phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, ethanol, cyclomethicone, dimethicone, hexamethyldisiloxane, isopropyl palmitate, isopropyl myristate, glycerol and admixtures thereof.

28. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 27, wherein the organic surface modifier is ion-dipole bonded on the inner platelet surface of the clay in an amount in the range of about 10% to about 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the surface-modified clay.

29. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 27, wherein the organic surface modifier is an alkyl pyrrolidone, wherein the alkyl has at least 6 carbon atoms.

30. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 27, wherein the amount of surface modified clay dispersed in the cosmetically acceptable solvent is in the range of 1% to about 30% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

31. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 27, wherein the amount of surface modified clay dispersed in the cosmetically acceptable solvent is in the range of about 5% to about 15% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

32. (Previously Presented) An allergen sorbent composition comprising a synthetic smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol, phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

33. (Currently amended) An allergen sorbent comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an alkyl pyrrolidone surface modifier intercalant molecule to form a surface-modified clay, said intercalant molecule containing a carbonyl moiety and an alkyl moiety having at least 6 carbon atoms [[and is]] selected from the group consisting of a carboxylic acid, a ketone, an aldehyde, a lactone, a lactam, and a pyrrolidone, said allergen sorbent being dispersed in a carrier to form an allergen sorbent composition in the form of a salve, wherein the composition comprises 1% to about 30% by weight of the allergen sorbent and 99% to 70% by weight carrier.

34. (Canceled).

35. (Canceled).

36. (Canceled).

37. (Previously presented) An allergen sorbent composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an alkyl pyrrolidone surface modifier intercalant molecule wherein the alkyl contains at least 6 carbon atoms, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable solvent selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, ethanol, cyclomethicone, dimethicone, hexamethyldisiloxane, isopropyl palmitate, isopropyl myristate, glycerol and admixtures thereof.

38. (Previously presented) A method for protecting skin from contact with an allergen comprising topically applying to the skin an allergen sorbent composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone, and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier, wherein the allergen sorbent composition is applied as a salve.

39. (Previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the surface modifier is an alkyl pyrrolidone, wherein the alkyl contains at least 6 carbon atoms.

40. (Previously presented) A method for protecting skin from contact with an allergen comprising topically applying to the skin an allergen sorbent composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone, and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier, wherein the allergen sorbent composition is applied as an aerosol spray.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the surface modifier is an alkyl pyrrolidone, wherein the alkyl contains at least 6 carbon atoms.

42. (Previously presented) A method for protecting skin from contact with an allergen comprising topically applying to a substrate selected from the group consisting of clothing, shoes, and pets, an allergen sorbent composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone, and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier and applied to deactivate the allergen sorbed on the substrate.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 42, wherein the surface modifier is an alkyl pyrrolidone, wherein the alkyl contains at least 6 carbon atoms.

44. (Previously presented) A method for protecting skin from contact with an allergen comprising topically applying to the skin an allergen sorbent composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone, and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, ethanol, a volatile silicon fluid, isopropyl myristate, glycerol, and admixtures thereof.

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the surface modifier is an alkyl pyrrolidone, wherein the alkyl contains at least 6 carbon atoms.

46. (Previously presented) A method for protecting skin from contact with an allergen comprising topically applying to the skin an allergen sorbent composition comprising a synthetic smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol, phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone and pyrrolidone, said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay to form a surface-modified clay; said surface-modified clay dispersed in a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the surface modifier is an alkyl pyrrolidone, wherein the alkyl contains at least 6 carbon atoms.

48. (Previously presented) A method of deactivating an allergen and reducing the severity of an allergic reaction caused by contact of the allergen with human skin comprising applying to the allergen-exposed skin area of an individual, after exposure of said skin area to said allergen, a composition comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an organic surface modifier intercalant molecule that contains at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of aldehyde, ketone, carboxylic acid, alcohol, phenol, ether, catechol, lactam, lactone and pyrrolidone; said intercalant molecule being ion-dipole bonded on an inner platelet surface of the clay; said clay dispersed in a cosmetically-acceptable carrier.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the surface modifier is an alkyl pyrrolidone, wherein the alkyl contains at least 6 carbon atoms.

50. (New) An allergen sorbent comprising a smectite clay having a cation exchange capacity of at least 75 meq./100 grams of clay, intercalated with an alkyl pyrrolidone surface modifier intercalant molecule to form a surface-modified clay, said intercalant molecule containing a carbonyl moiety and an alkyl moiety having at least 6 carbon atoms selected from the group consisting of a carboxylic acid, a ketone, an aldehyde, a lactone, a lactam, and a pyrrolidone, said allergen sorbent being dispersed in a carrier to form an allergen sorbent composition in the form of an aerosol spray, wherein the composition comprises 1% to about 30% by weight of the allergen sorbent and 99% to 70% by weight carrier.